

REMARKS

Claims 1-9, 11, 12, 16, 26-29, 33-35, 39, 45, 46, and 48-61 are pending.

In the Office Action, claims 8, 16, 45, 46, 52 and 59 are rejected under 35 U.S.C 112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter regarding as the invention. Claims 1-4, 7, 9, 11, 12, 27, 29, 33-35, 39, 48-49, 51, 53 and 54 are rejected under 35 U.S.C 102(b) as being anticipated by Flint et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,486,402). Claims 5, 6, 16, 28 and 50 are rejected under 35 U.S.C 103(a) as being unpatentable over Flint. Claims 55-58 and 60-61 are rejected under 35 U.S.C 103(a) as being unpatentable over Flint in view of *Microspheres: Microspheres Engineered for a Wide Choice of Unique Enhancements* by 3M and Zeelan ("3M/Zeelan"). Each of these rejections are respectfully traversed.

In Flint, a matrix material containing cells is coated on one or more sides of a fabric ply used to form a printing blanket. Such cell-containing matrix material provides increased compressibility to the fabric plies used in the printing blanket and thus provide a reduction in the size of the compressible layer required in the printing blanket (see Col. 5, lines 36-37 and Col. 6, lines 46-57). The cells may be formed by mechanically inducing air into a matrix forming material or through the use of chemical blowing agents (i.e. foaming agents) or through the use of microspheres. But in all instances, the purpose of adding the closed cells to the matrix material is to impart compressibility to the fabric ply, compressibility being a characteristic particularly useful for printing blankets. The amount of closed cells (i.e. amount of microspheres) in the matrix is the *amount sufficient to provide compressibility* (see col. 5, lines 36-38). Flint does not teach, suggest or disclose a synthetic film for laminates wherein ceramic microspheres are added in an amount to provide a scratch resistance of about 2.5 Newtons or higher as claimed in the present application.

Nor does Flint teach, disclose or suggest a method of producing synthetic resin film for laminates wherein a substrate is impregnated with a first thermosetting resin

composition comprising a first uncured thermosetting resin and a low profile additive, drying the impregnated substrate, impregnating the dried substrate with a second thermosetting resin composition comprising a second uncured thermosetting resin and a low profile additive, and again drying the impregnated substrate such as that claimed in the present application. In the examples of Flint, it is shown that the fabric plies were given two passes of a latex mixture and then passed through a spreader oven to dry, not cure or partially cure the latex (see Col. 10, line 58-62). The plies were then passed again through the spreader oven to simultaneously cure the latex and expand the microspheres (see Col. 10, lines 62-65). Drying of the fabric ply substrate in Flint did not occur between the two passes of the latex mixture and at no point following the drying was the fabric ply impregnated again with a microsphere containing matrix material.

Further, as discussed above, the use of cell-containing matrix coated onto a fabric ply is taught by Flint to provide increased *compressibility* to the fabric ply. This is desirable because one wants to increase the overall compressibility of the resulting printing blanket while still adhering to the limited dimensions available for each layer of the printing blanket and to the limitations for overall dimensions of the printing blanket itself.

3M/Zeelan refer to using its alkali alumino silicate ceramic microspheres in high solids industrial thermoplastic coatings and teaches that such microspheres reduce VOCs, and improves hardness, corrosion resistance, abrasion resistance, and sprayability. 3M/Zeelan do not teach or suggest that such alkali alumino silicate ceramic microspheres are useful in decorative laminates, an application where it is important that some of the impregnated paper layers maintain, after impregnation, the pleasing esthetic qualities of the paper; nor does 3M/Zeelan teach or suggest that such alkali alumino silicate ceramic microspheres are useful for thermosetting resins.

3M/Zeelan does not teach or in any way suggest that its alkali alumino silicate ceramic microspheres could be combined with the fabric ply of Flint, which is used for

applications such as printing blankets wherein compressibility is the desirable characteristic. Thus, there is no suggestion to one skilled in the art to modify the fabric ply of Flint to use the 3M/Zeelan microspheres and there would especially be no expectation of success that such a combination would produce a synthetic resin film for laminates having a high scratch resistance.

Thus, for the reasons set forth above, the present invention is both novel and non-obvious over the cited references.

The Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider the rejection of the pending claims and find the claims in condition for immediate allowance.


In accordance with Section 714.01 of the M.P.E.P., the following information is presented in the event that a call may be deemed desirable by the Examiner:

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Respectfully submitted,

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